



## **Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority - Policy and Strategy**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Joint Fire / Police HQ, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 26 April 2024 from 10.00 am - 10.56 am**

### **Membership**

#### Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)  
Councillor Richard Butler  
Councillor Sybil Fielding  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor Nigel Turner

#### Absent

Councillor Tom Hollis  
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler  
(substituted by Councillor Richard Butler)

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Leila Berry - Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Craig Parkin - Chief Fire Officer  
Mick Sharman - Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Damien West - Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Laura Wilson - Senior Governance Officer

### **15 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Jonathan Wheeler (Councillor Richard Butler substituting)  
Malcolm Townroe

### **16 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **17 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **18 Governance Arrangements**

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report detailing the updated arrangements for the provision of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer following the termination of the existing provision arrangements with Nottingham City Council, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) Since inception of the Authority in 1998 Clerking and Monitoring Officer arrangements along with governance services have all been provided by Nottingham City Council under a buy-back of services arrangement. Irrespective of this provision, the Authority still had to formally appoint the Monitoring Officer which it did with the current incumbent, Malcolm R. Townroe, in July 2005. Mr Townroe has now confirmed his retirement from Nottingham City Council with effect from 28 April 2024.
- (b) Following confirmation of the proposed retirement of Mr Townroe from Nottingham City Council the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority, served notice on Nottingham City Council to terminate the buyback of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer provision. This takes effect from the date of Mr Townroe's retirement. It does not affect the provision of governance services which will be the subject of further review going forwards.
- (c) Given that Mr Townroe has already been appointed to act as the Authority's Clerk and Monitoring Officer, it is proposed that he be appointed directly as an employee of the Authority on an annualised hours or part time basis immediately following his retirement from Nottingham City Council. This will ensure continuity of the current Clerk and Monitoring Officer provision and also provide an element of corporate memory around the governance agenda. Given that Mr Townroe is also a qualified solicitor his title with the Authority will be reviewed to reflect this.
- (d) The cost of employing the Clerk and Monitoring Officer directly will be contained within the existing financial envelope for the provision of Clerk, Monitoring Officer and governance services.

Members welcomed the continuity that the appointment will provide.

#### **Resolved to note**

- (1) The arrangements with regard to the direct employment of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer.**
- (2) That arrangements for provision of governance services will be reviewed in due course.**

#### **19 10-Year Workforce Diversity Planning**

Leila Berry, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report providing an update on the Service's progress in developing a 10-Year Workforce Diversity Plan, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) The Service's work to improve the diversity of its workforce has been ongoing for nearly two decades. Numerous reports produced by Central Government have been highly critical of the slow pace of change within the sector.
- (b) The Service commissioned its own review of equality, diversity and inclusion practice during 2021-22 and a revisit was undertaken at the end of last year. One of the recommendations was that 'Resources to match aspiration: shift from expecting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) service delivery excellence and workforce

diversity to reflect the population whilst under-resourcing the work that it takes to achieve this, to a longer-term approach, with more courageous proactive positive action and engagement enabled by stable staffing and budget commitment to achieve success.

- (c) Whilst the pace of change has been slow, some encouraging progress has been made over the years, particularly in improving the numbers of female firefighters and employees who are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual. However, progress in attracting racially marginalised groups to the Service is not where the organisation would want it to be. In particular, attraction rates of women of colour to employment at the Service remain low and this needs to be addressed as part of this work.
- (d) To improve performance in this area it is proposed that the Service develops a 10-Year Plan. To do this in a methodical way, the following phases will be used - analysis; plan; do; and review.
- (e) The analysis phase consists of three separate workstreams, the first of which involves analysis and insight of the most recent Census data commissioned via Nottingham Trent University (NTU). This work will support the Service's understanding of Nottinghamshire's changing communities and will inform both this programme of work relating to the attraction and recruitment of diverse talent, as well as supporting wider community engagement initiatives across the Service. This work started in March 2024 and will last approximately six months.
- (f) Whilst the quantitative work undertaken by NTU is important, the qualitative insights to be gained from talking to community members is as valuable. A second piece of work starting this month will enable NFRS to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of under-represented groups in Nottingham who may face barriers in accessing employment opportunities or services. The Service has data demonstrating that City residents are underrepresented in its workforce and so the focus will be on this geographical area and those groups who are under-represented in the workforce, including women and ethnic minorities.
- (g) A third party with expertise in this area will be delivering this work between April and July. They will present their findings and recommendations to the Strategic Leadership Team at the end of their field work. This work, alongside the work that NTU is supporting, will enable NFRS to build its diversity plan based on firm foundations. The final part of this work is a desktop review of the research papers and sector-based reports which are in the public domain. This will also be used to inform the planning process.
- (h) Socio-economic deprivation will also be a key area of focus for the Service during the analysis phase. As a result of independent EDI review this has now been added to the Service's equality impact assessment process and template.
- (i) By July 2024, the Service will have a better understanding of what conclusions have been drawn by the quantitative and qualitative studies and Members will be briefed via the Strategic Inclusion Board and the Human Resources Committee.
- (j) The outcomes of the analysis phase will also start to inform a short-term workplan for the newly established Community Engagement Team which will sit in the Fire

Prevention Department. The Community Engagement Team will include both uniformed and non-uniformed colleagues, with a focus on community safety and positive action activities, including youth engagement. The Service's positive action offering will become more comprehensive and consistent than it has been previously with a focus on a regular presence in communities, not just during firefighter recruitment campaigns.

- (k) Defining the ambition and setting smarter targets will happen post analysis phase. By the autumn of this year, the Service will have undertaken the analysis and insight necessary to formulate meaningful and measurable objectives as part of the 10-year plan. Members are a key stakeholder in this work and regular feedback will be sought.

During the discussion which followed, the following points were made:

- (l) It is important that the work of the team is commended, and it is recognised that this report demonstrates that the Authority is self-reflective as it highlights the further work required as well as the progress made to date.
- (m) There is a need to increase representation further, but the Plan is ambitious and falls within the remit of the Human Resources Committee for ongoing monitoring.
- (n) The Plan provides clarity and focus and will demonstrate results over time, which will re-instil confidence in the community.

#### **Resolved to**

- (1) Endorse a long-term commitment to workforce diversity via a 10-year Diversity Plan.**
- (2) Note the contents of the report.**
- (3) Agree to receive future updates via the Human Resources Committee.**

#### **20 Manchester Arena Inquiry - Volume Two: Update**

Damien West, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report providing an update on progress in relation to the recommendations within Volume Two of the Manchester Arena Inquiry, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) On 22 May 2017, a homemade explosive device was detonated in the foyer of the Manchester Arena following an Ariana Grande concert. 22 people were killed and 1,017 were injured, many of them being children, with several hundred more left suffering psychological trauma.
- (b) Volume Two of the Manchester Arena Inquiry was published on 3 November 2022. Volume Two focussed on the impact of any inadequacies in the planning and preparation by the emergency services and in the emergency response. This includes whether any inadequacies undermined the ability of the response to save life or contributed to the extent of the loss of life.
- (c) An initial report was first presented to the Policy and Strategy on 27 January 2023 which outlined the approach the Service was taking to implement the identified sector learning.

At that meeting, Members agreed to receive update reports to enable oversight and scrutiny against the Service's action plan.

- (d) The Service's Risk and Assurance Team led on the review of the report and is overseeing the Service's action plan, which has 53 recommendations. Each recommendation is defined as to the action required to deliver the improvement and has a timeframe of completion. Of the 53 recommendations, 32 have been completed and closed and 21 are being worked towards. Progress against all recommendations is on-track and are set to be completed by December 2024.
- (e) As an example of some of the learning that has been implemented, the Service has reviewed all of its operational policy and procedures relating to marauding terrorist attacks (MTA). Amendments have been made in collaboration with regional partners. The Service also has an agreed programme to roll out the new national guidance – Joint Operating Principles for MTA, Edition 3.
- (f) Internal scrutiny of the Service action plan is through the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Assurance Board which is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer.
- (g) The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Operations Committee has also established a strategic board to ensure consistency in responses across all UK Fire and Rescue Services, with quarterly reporting established to track progress of individual fire and rescue services.
- (h) The Service is actively working with colleagues within the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to implement the learning via a specifically created Manchester Arena Inquiry sub-group. NFRS chairs this sub-group, which has attendance from all Category One and relevant Category Two responders. This group has identified 55 recommendations from the Volume Two report with relevance to the LRF.
- (i) The LRF's action plan defines each recommendation and sets out the timeframe of completion for each. Whilst coordination and engagement across all partners has faced some initial challenges, full completion is anticipated to be by December 2024. Of the 55 recommendations, 33 have been completed and closed and 22 are being worked towards. Scrutiny of the work of the sub-group is through the LRF's Resilience Working Group, with exceptions reported to the full LRF meeting.
- (j) As well as learning from the Volume Two report, in February, colleagues from Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, who were involved in the Manchester Arena organisational debrief, came into Service and presented a case study on the incident, which gave a real insight into events that happened on the night, as well as highlighting some further learning. This learning will be reviewed alongside the MAI action plan.
- (k) In March the Service undertook a full scale, 'no-notice', exercise to test the application of some of the learning from the MAI action plan. This exercise involved the evacuation of around 7000 people from a sports venue, then a realistic MTA scenario, and involved all blue light partners. Special thanks are given to the Ice Arena, the Nottingham Panthers and their fans for their involvement.
- (l) The exercise is subject to a full review and formal debrief report. One key

area of assurance already known was the effective response of the Service's MTA capability, supporting resources and Officers, and initial on scene multiagency working, which is an area which received criticism in the inquiry report.

- (m) The Service will continue to progress the recommendations internally and across the LRF, reporting progress via the governance structure. Progress reports will be presented to the CRMP Assurance Board and to Fire Authority Members, through the Community Safety Committee, at key milestones, with a proposed final sign-off to the Fire Authority in December 2024.
- (n) His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services is expected to audit progress against the recommendations of the Volume Two report during the next tranche of inspections.
- (o) Specific MTA funding from Government has been reduced from £56,000 a year to £19,500 a year, as of April 2023. This reduction will lead to a requirement, after 2024, for the replacement of equipment and facilitation of training to be funded from Service budgets, which do not currently meet this requirement. The additional cost will be addressed as part of Service financial planning.

During the discussion which followed, the following points were made:

- (p) Thoughts are with those killed and injured during the horrific attack and their families.
- (q) The response from staff and practical testing of arrangements is commended.
- (r) The reduction in funding from £56,000 to £19,500, particularly given the recent attacks in Nottingham using a vehicle and knife, is unacceptable and representations will be made to try to get the decision changed.
- (s) In relation to the 55 recommendations identified by the LRF, communication with partners is ongoing regarding the deadline for completion.

#### **Resolved to**

- (1) Note the update and endorse the actions being taken by the Service in response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry.**
- (2) Receive further reports for the monitoring and scrutiny of the implementation of learning through the Community Safety Committee.**

#### **21 Exclusion of the public**

**Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the following item in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 3) on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

**22 Mobilisation Project Update and Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) Software Contracts Award**

Mick Sharman, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report.

**Resolved to approve the recommendations in the report, as amended at the meeting.**